

## **MINUTES OF THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

*July 15, 2013 – 9 AM*

Present: Ronnie Harrill, Chairman; Kim Warner, Vice-Chairman; John Bittle; Jim Huffstickler; Phillip Miller; Amy Jenkins; Jason Ruff, Chief Building Inspector; and Bill Eckler, Commissioner; Conference call by Director of Planning/Public Works, Danny Searcy, in absentia.

Call to Order and Welcome by Chairman Ronnie Harrill, who led in prayer.

Motion to approve minutes from June 17, 2013, meeting by Kim Warner; seconded by Jim Huffstickler and unanimously approved by committee.

### **New Business:**

The following offices were filled for the upcoming year:

- Chairman – Ronnie Harrill with motion by Kim Warner and second by Jim Huffstickler; unanimous vote from committee
- Vice Chairman – Kim Warner with motion by John Bittle and second by Jim Huffstickler; unanimous vote from committee
- Secretary – Danny Wells with motion by Jim Huffstickler and unanimous vote from committee

Mountain Way, Phase 3 (grandfathered subdivision) – Motion by Kim Warner to approve as submitted, contingent upon the Planning Director's grandfathered roads standard inspection; seconded by Jim Huffstickler; Motion carried with unanimous vote.

### **Old Business:**

GreyRock update, Dave Odom of Odom Engineering – There has been a substantial amount of rain—20 consecutive days, in fact, on this project, but progress is being made in phase 4B. “There has been no real damage from a cost standpoint,” states Odom, “[we’ve] just lost a lot of time.” Odom anticipates completion of phase 4B by end of week with crews ready to move on to next phase. Odom also anticipates work on all phases except 12 and 10 being finished by Thanksgiving with those last 2 phases being completed by May or June, 2014.

Queens Gap update, again by Dave Odom of Odom Engineering – Work is still in the bidding process with everyone involved anxious to being talking strategy. Water system design is a long, slow process—and we are approximately 1½ months into this 6 month process. Crews are working on some stream cleanup, in association with Watermark Engineering, with no problems anticipated. Anticipate small another area will likely be worked on next summer with beginning of conduit installation.

### **Miscellaneous Business:**

1. Solar farm update by Kim Warner with conference call to Planning Director. Warner feels looking into a possible moratorium on solar farms a good idea until the committee can study

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the impact on land, neighboring parcels, etc., especially since one company has shown interest in starting a solar farm on a 458-acre tract on Ferry Rd. Searcy reminds committee that a moratorium can be cut short if work is completed early, however NC General Statutes require specific criteria for extensions that is often difficult to achieve. Discussion ensued that at least 8 months would be needed to sufficiently study this subject, including the impact on the environment, sufficient buffers for neighboring tracts, and what would happen with the equipment on-site if the solar farm operators pulled off the project at a future date. Motion to request public hearing for moratorium at the August County Commission meeting and to form subcommittee comprised of Ronnie Harrill, Kim Warner, John Bittle, and Amy Jenkins, made by Kim Warner and revising time frame of moratorium to 9 months with second by Jim Huffstickler. Motion carried with unanimous vote by committee. First subcommittee meeting slated for Tuesday, July 23, at 9:00 in the Commissioner's Room. Bill Eckler, County Commissioner, also wishes to be present at any of these subcommittee meetings he can fit into his schedule. Motion by Jim Huffstickler to require the County Building Inspections Dept to require the following items before a commercial review on a proposed solar farm can begin: 1) Copy of property lease, 2) Official approval by NC DENR, 3) Proposed plans/designs, and 4) Contract with utility for ROW, etc.; seconded by John Bittle with unanimous vote by committee. Ruff states BI policy is that commercial plan review generally takes 3-5 days from the point of submission with 3-5 days restarting at any point at which more information is needed. Searcy will e-mail slideshow to subcommittee members, who will plan to attend solar farm informational workshop in Asheville.

Adjournment – With no other business noted by Chairman Harrill, motion was made to adjourn by Kim Warner and seconded by Jim Huffstickler with unanimous vote.